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Item 114 (e) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 16 June 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and has the honour to inform him that Germany has presented its candidature for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018 at the elections to be held during the seventieth session of the Assembly, in 2015.

Therefore, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Government of Germany has the honour to attach herewith the voluntary pledges of Germany reaffirming its commitment to the promotion of and respect for all human rights and its active engagement in the work of the Human Rights Council (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Germany would like to request that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

* A/70/50.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 16 June 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Germany to the Human Rights Council, 2016-2018

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Federal Republic of Germany was a founding member of the Human Rights Council, had a seat on that body from 2006 to 2009, and currently holds one (2013-2015). The Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Office of the United Nations and to the other International Organizations in Geneva, Joachim Rücker, is the elected President of the Human Rights Council for 2015.

2. The Federal Republic of Germany is seeking re-election for a consecutive term to the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018. The strong commitment to and respect for all human rights by Germany is demonstrated by the following:

(a) Respect for human rights is of vital importance to the Federal Republic of Germany. The Constitution of Germany, the Basic Law, begins by stating that human dignity shall be inviolable and then goes on to say that the German people acknowledge inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every community;

(b) Germany is a party to the fundamental human rights conventions, which were incorporated into national law following ratification. Germany has entered into extensive commitments to the protection of human rights, and allows their implementation to be monitored at both the national and international levels;

(c) The Government of Germany also feels that it has an obligation to strive to protect and foster respect for human rights throughout the world. It does this by conducting a critical dialogue and by providing concrete support for projects aimed at improving human rights. Human rights and human rights principles are systematically taken into account in German development policy programmes and projects;

(d) Protection and respect for human rights begins in one's own country. Germany regards this as a task that it has to tackle anew every day and it has to allow itself to be judged by how well it does that;

(e) The German Institute for Human Rights, established in March 2001, is the independent "national institute" of Germany for human rights, as required by the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). It monitors the human rights activities of the Government closely and critically. The Government cultivates close contacts with civil society and conducts with it an active discourse on human rights;

(f) The Government regards its human rights policy as a cross-cutting task that affects all areas of society. The realization of article 3 of the Constitution, which states that men and women have equal rights, the development of the national action plan to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, efforts to ensure equal opportunities and participation for people with a migrant

background and the implementation of the national action plan to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance are just a few examples of the ongoing commitment of the Government to improving the human rights situation;

(g) The Federal Republic of Germany has been a committed supporter of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms since its establishment. Germany has issued a standing invitation to the special procedures of the Council. It has been the initiator of four mandates of the special rapporteurs on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, and on the right to privacy. Germany has provided a number of fully independent experts who have made substantial and much-recognized contributions within various treaty bodies and in the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee. A leading German expert, Heiner Bielefeldt, is the current Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

3. In connection with its candidature to the Human Rights Council, the Government of Germany undertakes to:

(a) Continue to work for the universality and indivisibility of human rights;

(b) Continue actively to advance the implementation of its obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international human rights conventions, the European Convention on Human Rights and other international and regional conventions;

(c) Fulfil its reporting obligations deriving from those conventions, cooperate in a spirit of mutual trust with the treaty bodies, disseminate the concluding remarks of the treaty bodies, examine how to implement them and report on the corresponding implementation steps;

(d) Continue its close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and continue to provide substantial support for its work;

(e) Work towards enabling the Human Rights Council to carry out in full its mandate under General Assembly resolution 60/251, by which the Council was established, and granting national institutions for human rights, within the meaning of the Paris Principles, and civil society their proper place on the Council;

(f) Pursue an active role in the Human Rights Council, in particular by continuing its sponsorship of the mandates of the special rapporteurs on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and on the right to privacy;

(g) Actively seek cooperation in the Human Rights Council on improving the protection of human rights beyond regional frontiers;

(h) Cooperate with the instruments and mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, in particular by upholding its standing invitation to the special rapporteurs and working actively on the universal periodic review.

4. At the national level, the Government of Germany undertakes to:

(a) Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) by 2017 at the latest;

(b) Implement and further develop the 2011 national action plan to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, involving civil society in the process on a broad basis;

(c) Implement the strategy on human rights in German development policy;

(d) Develop by 2016 a national action plan on business and human rights to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework, consulting representatives from politics and business, as well as from trade unions, civil society, associations and academia;

(e) Fully implement its plan of action for human rights for the period 2014-2016.